



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Early Educator Pandemic Retention Bonus

Early Educator Pandemic Retention Bonus Program Overview

About the Early Educator Pandemic Retention Bonus program

As essential workers, early educators continue to play a crucial role in keeping licensed child care programs open and serving Rhode Island families throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) was awarded \$18.7 million dollars in funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF), as appropriated by the Governor and the General Assembly. This program is intended to invest in early educators by offering bonuses to direct care staff employed at DHS-licensed child care providers.

Educators will be eligible to receive a maximum of 2 semiannual bonuses of \$1,500 each, depending on eligibility in each application window. These retention bonuses will supplement educators' compensation to support retention and recruitment in the early learning sector, as well as recognize the vital work that early educators do in supporting the State's littlest learners.

Application Timeline and Eligibility

Two application windows will be open in Spring 2022 to award semiannual bonuses. The following table outlines the timeline for these application windows and the eligibility criteria for applicants.

Window	Timeline	Funding Amount	Eligibility Criteria
Application Window #1	March 18, 2022-April 22, 2022	\$1,500.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time or part-time employee of a DHS-licensed child care program• Providing direct care to children during some portion of the average day of operation• Employed for at least 6 consecutive months at the same DHS-licensed program by December 1, 2021
Application Window #2	June 1, 2022-June 30, 2022	\$1,500.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time or part-time employee of a DHS-licensed child care program• Providing direct care to children during some portion of the average day of operation• Employed for at least 6 consecutive months at the same DHS-licensed program by June 1, 2022

For questions related to eligibility, please contact childcaregrants@pcgus.com.

Application Process

Applying for this bonus is a two-step process:

- **Step One: Submit an Eligibility Form**
 - **How to access:** The link to the Eligibility Form will be posted on <http://kids.ri.gov/cabinet/funding-opportunities/>. The form will gather basic information, including your name, email, DHS-licensed program at which you



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work, the date you started employment at the program, and your role. The estimate time required to complete this form is approximately 5 minutes.

- **Purpose:** This Eligibility Form will be used to verify your employment. Information gathered in this form will be shared by email with your DHS-licensed program employer for verification of your employment. Once verified, you will be emailed the link to the full application.
- **Step Two: Submit Application**
 - **How to access:** The link to the full application will be sent directly to your email (as submitted in the Eligibility Form) from childcaregrants@pcgus.com. The estimated time required to complete this form is approximately 15-20 minutes.
 - The application will be hosted on an online, cloud-based tool called GrantsConnect. If you do not have a GrantsConnect account, you will be prompted to create an account prior to accessing the application. Additional instructions will be included in the email.
 - The application will collect banking and tax information (such as your social security number, bank account and routing number if you opt for a direct deposit, etc.), additional information related to your employment, and agreement to attestation language.

DHS anticipates disbursing funds within 30 business days of receiving a completed application.

Applicants will elect to receive funds either by direct deposit or by mailed check. Electing to receive funds by check may delay payment up to an additional 30 business days due to processing and mail delivery.

Please note, awards within this program will be issued on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Additional Resources

We want this application process to be straightforward and are here to help! There are several ways to access assistance, in English and Spanish, during the application process.

- **View online resources and webinars** at <http://kids.ri.gov/cabinet/funding-opportunities/>.
- **Contact us!** Reach out to our team at: ChildCareGrants@pcgus.com or **833-930-3540** for assistance in English or Spanish.